

Making the Connection: Impact of School Leadership, Social Mobilization and Community Involvement on School Performance

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Abstract

It is a common perception that performance of any organization depends on the vision of its leadership; this is leadership that enables the organization to make a difference. In Pakistan, school leadership is criticized that it has not been trained to meet the challenges of 21st century. Governments have launched different policies and plans to generate the awareness among the mass about their role in school education and make it clear that leadership's social mobilization and community involvement is necessary to achieve the desired goals for best survival in the present era. To involve the community in school management, concept of school management committees (SMCs) was introduced but the main obstacle to greater success remains the lack of acceptance and comprehension of the concept at both the community as well as school level (National Education Policy, 2009). Government of the Punjab also conducts workshops and trainings for school leaders to train them for social mobilization in the community and to involve community effectively in the school management to accelerate the performance of the school. The objectives of the study were to explore the contribution of school leadership, social mobilization and community involvement towards school performance and to find the best predictor of school performance. The sample for the study was the school headmasters/principals who have SMCs and have been trained by Government of the Punjab in social mobilization and to work with community and school. A self-developed questionnaire was used for the study to explore the best predictor among school leadership, social mobilization and community involvement of school performance. Multiple regressions were applied and it was found that community involvement was the best predictor of school performance.

Keywords: School Leadership, Social Mobilization, Community Involvement, School Performance

Introduction

In any organization, leadership's vision works as a driven power that provides direction and lead the workforce towards destination. It is leadership that has potential to accelerate the performance of its employees and can bring collective efforts at one page. Two or three decades ago, in Pakistan, the concept of school leadership was not so popular. School administrators such as headmaster/DDEOs, AEOs were chosen from the local senior faculty with the intention that they have experience and know the working culture. At the same time, it is said that they have academic experience but they do not have the required managerial experience to work in the leader capacity. In schools' system, there are so many problems which are linked with school leadership such as lack of initiatives, financial adjustment and good governance in the educational institutions etc. Currently, the role of community in school development is equally important. Community members can work as school ambassador to generate the awareness about education among the other members of community and can motivate them to send their children to school for bright future. In mobilizing

people, school leadership in connection with community can play a significant role to uplift the enrollment campaigns and quality of education etc. To involve the community in the school management for effective working, government has introduced the idea of school management committees (SMCs) that bridge the gap between the school and community. The main objectives of SMCs were to attract the people towards schools and monitoring the school efficiency. In SMCs, the role of school leadership was as social mobilizer to work closely with community, understand their problems, motivate them for education and ultimately strengthen the school system. It is also blamed that SMCs are not so effective because both school and community are not hand in hands in the same line. It is the responsibility of school's leadership to go ahead towards community and work as social mobilizer to bring the community towards schools and realize the importance of SMCs and role of their coordination to promote the education among the community. Today, improving school leadership ranks high on the list of priorities for school reform (Wallace Foundation, 2012)

For school's leaders, workshops/trainings are managed time to time to train them for working as a social mobilizers in the society to have a close link with the people to prepare them mentally to understand the importance of education and to decorate their children with education. Government also launches enrollment campaigns to bring the all school age children to schools to achieve the universal education.

Literature review

Leaders primarily work through and with other people. They also help to establish the conditions that enable others to be effective. Thus, leadership effects on school goals are indirect as well as direct (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004) state three main functions that leadership performs:

1. Developing people — Enabling teachers and other staff to do their jobs effectively, offering intellectual support and stimulation to improve the work, and providing models of practice and support.
2. Setting directions for the organization — developing shared goals, monitoring organizational performance, and promoting effective communication.
3. Redesigning the organization — creating a productive school culture, modifying organizational structures that undermine the work, and building collaborative processes.

The Wallace Foundation (2004) highlights the following role of school leadership for the improvement of the schools:

Local leaders [school leaders] must be able to help their colleagues understand how the externally-initiated reform might be integrated into local improvement efforts, provide the necessary supports for those whose practices must change and must win the cooperation and support of parents and others in the local community.

Today, school leadership is more demanding and changing. It requires a manager with more updated and decorated profile (Smith, 2008).

National Educational Policy (2009) of Pakistan documented that around the globe, many countries are paying special attention to training school leaders while in Pakistan, school leaders are mostly appointed from the teaching cadre without management experience. National Educational Policy (1998-2010) envisages that good governance in educational institution will be achieved by imparting intensive training in management and supervision.

School management and staff, parents, students and community are the stakeholders of educational system and system work effectively when all the stakeholders feel their responsibilities and

ownership. National Educational Policy (2009) describes the following policy actions in connection with stakeholders of educational system:

1. School management committees (SMCs) shall be strengthened through involvement of students, teachers, educationists, parents and society (STEPS).
2. The nature of SMCs shall be strengthened so that the members are able to make use of their experience.
3. To promote greater utilization of allocated funds, Government shall move from financial audit to performance or output audit system for SMCs.
4. Head teachers shall be trained in social mobilization to involve community effectively.
5. Awareness campaigns shall be launched at the District, Tehsil and union level, to sensitize communities about their role in school education.

Niazi (2012) conducted a study on school leadership and educational practices in Pakistan and found that a good leadership not only motivates staff it also plays a dynamic role to create team spirit among people working in a staff.

Abbreviations and Short Forms Used

Social mobilization means leadership's social mobilization.

School Performance (SP)

School Leadership (SL)

Social Mobilization (SM)

Community Involvement (CI)

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were

1. To measure the contribution of school leadership; social mobilization and community involvement for school performance.
2. To explore the best predictor from school leadership, social mobilization and community involvement for school performance.

Research Questions

The research questions for the study were:

1. What contribution do the school leadership, social mobilization and community involvement make to predict the school performance?
2. Which is the best predictor of school performance?

Delimitation of the Study

The study was delimited to the boys high schools/higher secondary schools of District Bahawalnagar. The researcher belongs to Bahawalnagar so it was convenient for him to collect data from District Bahawalnagar (Punjab).

Methodology

By method, the study was survey research.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population for the current study, 102 school headmasters/principals of boys high schools/higher secondary schools, Bahawalnagar. The detail of the schools was taken from online school directory of academy of educational planning and management (AEPAM), Islamabad.

Openly accessible at <http://www.european-science.com>

Through convenient sampling technique, headmasters/principals of 85 boys high schools/higher secondary schools (urban and rural) were selected from five tehsils of district Bahawalnagar.

Instrument of the Study

A questionnaire was developed on five point Likert scale (strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree) after an authentic review of literature relevant to the study. There were four sub-scales in the questionnaire; each sub-scale was consisted five statements. The questionnaire was sent to these headmasters/principals through with a cover letter describing the objectives of the study. The researcher also requested headmasters/principals through mobile to send the filled questionnaire back. A total of 62 filled questionnaires were collected back and were treated as final sample.

Validation and Reliability

The questionnaire was validated by three educational managers/experts having field experience, they pointed out some statements which were not clear. They suggested keeping in view the field facts and the objectives of the study to rephrase these statements. The statements were rephrased in the light of their suggestions.

A pilot study with 10 headteachers was done to check the reliability of the questionnaire. The reliability was calculated by Cronbach's Alpha which was found 0.59. These 10 headmasters were considered for the final sample as well.

Data Analysis

Multiple regression was employed to measure the contribution of each independent variable (school leadership, social mobilization and community involvement) for dependent variable (School Performance). Pearson correlation between independent variables (school leadership, social mobilization and community involvement) was also calculated while utilized the correlation option in the regression.

Results

The results obtained while using multiple regression are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Correlation among School Leadership, Social Mobilization and Community Involvement

Correlations					
		SP	SL	SM	CI
Pearson Correlation	SP	1.00	.25	.09	.28
	SL	.25	1.00	-.07	.10
	SM	.09	-.07	1.00	.01
	CI	.28	.10	.010	1.00
Sig. (1-tailed)	SP	.	.02	.23	.01
	SL	.02	.	.28	.20
	SM	.23	.28	.	.46
	CI	.01	.20	.46	.

Table 1 shows that the independent variables such as school leadership, social mobilization and community involvement correlate substantially with school performance (.25, .09 and .28). Among the tested variables, community involvement contributes most (.28) in school performance.

School leadership is the second independent variable that contributes most (.25) while social mobilization is the variable that contributes least (.09) towards school performance.

The relationship between school leadership and social mobilization was -.07 while it was .10 for community involvement. Similarly, the relationship between social mobilization and community involvement was .01.

Table 2. Variance Explained by School Leadership, Social Mobilization and Community Involvement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.378	.143	.099	1.03482

Table 2 reveals that the R square value shows the amount of variance in the dependent variable (school performance) that can be explained by the independent variables, it means that independent variables (SL, SM, and CI) explain 14.3 percent of variance in school performance.

Table 3. Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	9.63	4.36		2.20	.03
	SL	.23	.12	.23	1.93	.05
	SM	.09	.10	.10	.87	.38
	CI	.23	.11	.25	2.09	.04

Table 3 shows that the largest Beta value is .256 which is for community involvement, this means that this variable makes the strongest unique contribution to explaining the dependent variable. School leadership is the second contributor to school performance and social mobilization is the least contributor. Sig values show that community involvement is making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable and the other two independent variables I.e school leadership and social mobilization are not making a significant unique contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable.

The independent variables (SL, SM, and CI) explain 14.3 percent of variance in dependent variable, school performance (Question 1). Of these three independent variables SL, SM, and CI, community involvement makes the largest contribution (Question 2).

Conclusion

It is a fact that schools could not perform well in isolation. All the stakeholders of school education are equally important for effective working of schools. School leadership deals with all the matters at front but the role of other actors such as community, parents and students are equally imperative. Leadership's vision, social mobilization and involvement of community are the variables that can contribute towards school performance in terms of its results for the community and society.

The current study found that community involvement is the best predictor that contributes most in the school performance. School leadership is the second contributor that affects the performance of the school.

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Questionnaire

School Leadership					
1	The role of School Leadership is to design activities/programs to attract people towards education.				
2	School Leadership is responsible to bridge the gap between school and community.				
3	School Leadership's cooperation affect the overall performance of the school.				
4	School Leadership is to settle down the local problems of people to improve the enrollment.				
5	School Leadership must work to improve the academic and social aspects of students.				
Social Mobilization					
6	Social mobilization of leadership creates awareness among mass about the importance of education.				
7	Social mobilization of leadership helps to resolve the local problems.				
8	Social mobilization of leadership calls parents to add their voices to improve the performance of the school.				
9	Social mobilization of leadership guides parents for their kids' future.				
10	Social mobilization creates harmony and help to understand the local cultural values.				
Community Involvement					
11	School-Community relationship can increase the enrollment and overall performance of school.				
12	Through School-Community partnership, school can generate its funds to equip the schools with facilities.				
13	School-Community partnership can monitor the quality of education and can help to improve the performance of school.				
14	School-Community partnership can help in reducing drop out and retention.				
15	School-Community vested with managerial and financial powers to address the schools problems.				
School Performance					
16	Leadership's vision can affect the school performance.				
17	Social mobilization of leadership can be a source to improve the performance of school in terms of enrollment and retention.				
18	School-community affects the external result and overall performance of the school.				
19	Community involvement affects the school matters positively and accelerates the performance.				
20	Community participation increases the check and balance over school problems and ultimately uplifts the school graph.				